Do You Work on Outdoor-steel Structures?

Industrial paints, primers and coatings on metal contain lead!

Protect yourself and your family from lead poisoning.

You may be at risk for lead exposure at work

Paints, primers, and other anti-rust coatings containing lead are present on thousands of bridges and outdoor steel structures to protect them from corrosion and weather damage.

Iron workers and painters are at greatest risk for exposure to lead during maintenance, repair, and demolition projects. In recent years, construction workers have had the highest blood lead levels seen in Washington State.

Some of the activities that can expose you to lead dust or fumes include the following:

- Grinding, sandblasting, sanding, sawing, or cutting

- Torch cutting, thermo-lancing, or welding
- Using or removing solder
- Using rivet busters, scalers, abrasive blasters, or any other tools that can create or stir up dust
- Cleaning up and handling lead waste

Exposure to high levels of lead can have harmful health effects on you… and on your family, too

- Impotence
- Reduced sex drive
- Stomach pain
- Loss of appetite
- Vomiting, diarrhea
- Kidney damage
- Muscle pain
- Joint pain
- Tiredness
- Moodiness
- Headaches
- Concentration and memory problems
- Anxiety
- Brain damage

These health effects and more could happen to you if you are exposed to high levels of lead.

Your family, especially children, may be exposed to lead dust brought home by you on your clothes and shoes, your thermos or lunch container, your tools, your car, or other things you bring back from work.

Children are affected by much smaller amounts of lead. Very small amounts of lead can cause serious problems, such as mental retardation, behavior problems, or slowed growth.

Lead can cause reproductive harm

Exposure to lead can cause reproductive effects in both men and women, resulting in damaged or unhealthy sperm, sterility, miscarriages, birth defects, and stillbirths. An unborn child can be affected if a pregnant woman is exposed to lead.

Lead gets into your body and can stay there

Lead can enter your body in two ways:

- Breathing in lead dust, mist, or fumes
- Swallowing lead dust on your hands from eating, drinking, or smoking

Lead poisoning is usually a slow process, often taking place over months or years. Lead can build up in your body and stay there for a long time.

With a very high exposure, lead poisoning can create a serious emergency, even within one workshift.

Protect yourself and your family from lead poisoning

The best way you can protect yourself and your family is to prevent or minimize your exposure to lead:

- Work with your employer to ensure that you are not overexposed to lead in your workplace.
- Follow the recommended safe work practices on the inside of this brochure.
- Don’t take lead-contaminated materials home, where the dust can harm your family!

Additional resources

Your doctor or other health care provider

See your doctor if you think you or others in your household have symptoms or if you are concerned about overexposure to lead. Ask your doctor for a blood-lead level test.

Your safety officer or industrial hygienist at work

Ask about ways to prevent or minimize your exposure to lead using engineering controls and protective equipment.

See additional information on inside of this brochure.

Department of Labor and Industries

"WISHA," or the Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act, is the state equivalent of OSHA. L&I's WISHA Services Division — not OSHA — is responsible for workplace safety and health regulations in Washington State.

WISHA offers free assistance and information to both employers and employees.

Call 1-800-423-7233 (4BE-SAFE) for more information.

Visit the L&I web site at www.LNI.wa.gov/Safety

Department of LABOR AND INDUSTRIES

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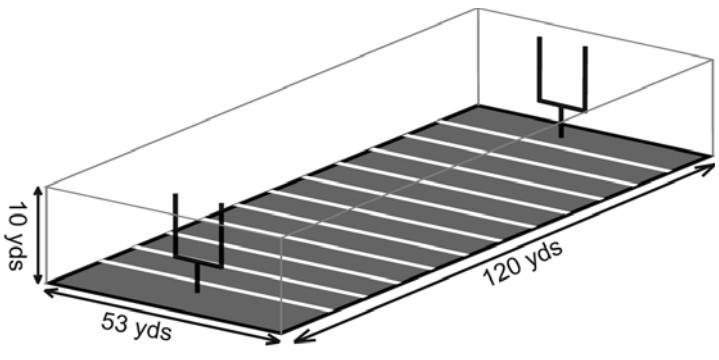
Protect Yourself from Lead Poisoning

How much lead in the air is hazardous?

The construction-industry lead standard requires your employer to make sure that lead in the air is not at hazardous levels (greater than 50 micrograms per cubic meter of air [mcg/m^3] averaged over an eight-hour period).



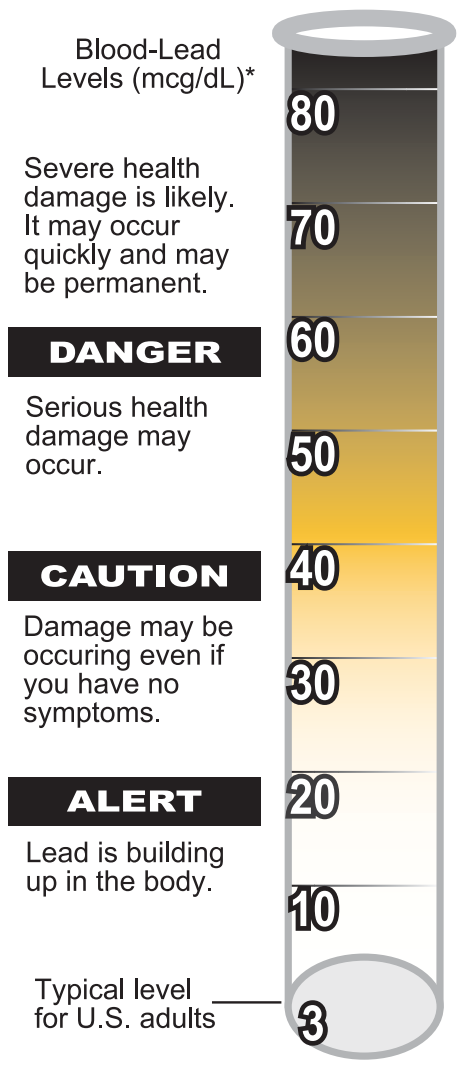
Just how much is 50 mcg/m^3?
Imagine a typical high school football field. Imagine placing a box over the field that went from sideline to side-line and from end zone to end zone with a lid at the top of the goal posts. 50 mcg/m^3 would be the same amount as half a penny dispersed in the air contained in the box.

No amount of lead is safe!

A blood-lead level (BLL) test measures how much lead is in your blood. It is the best indicator of recent exposure. If you are concerned about overexposure to lead, see your doctor and ask to have a BLL test.

How much is 20 mcg/dL?
That amount would be about the same as a cube of sugar in a 4,000 gallon water truck!

Blood-Lead Levels and Your Health



* Mcg/dL: micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood

Your Employer's Responsibilities

Your employer is responsible for providing:

- A safe and healthy workplace.
- Protection from harmful exposure to lead, including personal protective equipment (PPE) at no cost to you.
- A copy of air monitoring results, if you request it.
- A copy of the Lead rule (WAC 296-62-07521), if you request it.
- Training on how you can avoid lead exposure.
- Medical monitoring, which may include blood testing, medical exams, and consultation, if you are exposed to lead.
- Another job without loss of pay or benefits ("medical removal"), if you cannot work with lead for medical reasons.

Your Rights as a Worker

You have the right to:

- File a confidential complaint with L&I if you believe there may be a serious hazard.
- File a complaint with L&I if your employer is retaliating against you for asking about your rights or for having filed an L&I complaint. It is unlawful to retaliate against workers who ask about safety and health or who file a complaint.
- Call 1-800-423-7233 (4BE-SAFE) or the nearest L&I office for assistance.

Follow safe work practices and procedures

- Follow all safety rules. Use your respirator properly and always wear your personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Talk to your supervisor if you have any concerns about lead exposure at work. Ask about lead-free "clean" areas where you can wash, take breaks, store your street clothes, shower, and change.
- Avoid heating lead, for example, by stripping paint before torch-cutting.
- Don't stir up dust by sweeping or blowing. Wet clean or vacuum with a HEPA filter-equipped vacuum cleaner.
- Use water when grinding, sanding, or cutting objects that contain lead. When sandblasting, you must wear a respirator or sandblasting hood with fresh air supplied by a hose.
- Wash your hands and face very thoroughly with soap and water before you eat, drink, or smoke.
- Eat, drink, and smoke only in areas free of lead dust and fumes.
- Don't remove dust by blowing down or shaking out your clothing.
- Clean your hard hat, respirator, gloves, shoes/boots, any other PPE you use, and your tools, and store in a safe, clean place. If you must keep them with you, store them in a closable container.

Get the lead out – before you go home

- Use separate work clothes and shoes/boots while at work — don't wear them home. Keep your street clothes in a locker or clean place.
- If possible, shower and wash your hair at work before going home. At the very least, thoroughly wash your hands, arms, and face with soap and water. Be sure to use a clean towel.